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U. S. Department of Agriculture

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Housekeepers' Chat

Monday, October 6, 1930.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "Cleaning Carpets and Renovating Rugs." Information, including menu, from Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A. Author of verse unknown.

Bulletin available: "Floors and Floor Coverings."

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"Will you go shopping with me today?" asked my Next-Door-Neighbor. "I want to select a new rug for the living room, and I need your expert advice, Aunt Sammy."

"Thank you for the compliment," I replied, "but this is my busy day. I can't go shopping, because I have to —"

"Work!" said my Neighbor. "I know just what you are going to say. You can't go shopping with an old friend, because you have to stay home and work! I never saw anything like it! Day in, day out, you work. Do you know what happens to people who keep their noses to the grindstone, Aunt Sammy?"

"No. What?"

"I shall tell you. I shall tell you in verse:

If your nose is close  
To the grindstone rough,  
And you keep it down  
There long enough,  
In time you'll say  
There's no such thing  
As brooks that babble  
And birds that sing:  
These three will all  
Your world compose--  
Just You, the Stone,  
And your poor old Nose.

"There, Aunt Sammy. See what a dismal fate is in store for you? If you don't quit working so hard, before long your world will be composed of 'Just You, the Stone, and your poor old Nose.' It's too bad," sighed my Neighbor. "But there's nothing I can do. I have tried to warn you."

My Neighbor looked very sorry for me. She always looks very sorry for me when she is trying to persuade me to do something.



"Now my living room is small," began my Neighbor. "So I shall buy a bright green rug, with bright red roses scattered here and there, and a few purple morning glories to fill up the empty spaces. Then, when I have bought the rug, I will have the room papered in something rather lively -- do you favor pink tulips, Aunt Sammy, or are they too pale?"

"Come," I said. "Stop your nonsense. If you should dare to bring home a bright green rug with bright red roses and purple morning glories, I would never set foot across your threshold again!"

"I wouldn't like that," said my Neighbor. "But if you want to prevent this national calamity, you'd better put on your hat and come on to town with me."

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We went to town, my Neighbor and I, and we looked at rugs, and new fall suits, and hats. And then we went to a show, in the afternoon. A right good show. There was one line which Billy will appreciate: "The world would be a much better place for children, if the parents had to eat the spinach."

Well, to get back to the rug. Since my Neighbor's living room is small, she wanted to select a rug which is conservative in pattern. Large, distinct and colorful designs take up space, and should not be used in a small room, especially in rugs or in wall paper. Wall papers of plain or very indistinct patterns are not tiresome, and make an ideal background for the room furnishings. With plain walls and a plain rug, one may have figured upholstery, or figured curtains. All these things we took into account, while looking at rugs. Next week we are going back, to make our final choice.

The other day some one asked me a question about rugs and carpets. It was how to take care of them, how to lay them properly, and how to keep them in good condition.

First of all, they should be carefully laid. Rugs and carpets wear best on smooth, level floors. If the floors have defects which can't be remedied, cover them with padding, made for the purpose, or with carefully arranged layers of newspapers. Papers are especially good under fiber rugs and matting, because when the rugs are taken up for thorough cleaning, the dirt, which has sifted through, can be removed by simply folding and removing the newspapers.

Did you ever cover an unsightly floor, with a large rug, used with ingrain or other carpet tacked around it? In this case the padding in the middle of the room may be covered with carefully laid, overlapping strips of heavy manilla paper, held in place by the carpeting. The paper prevents dirt from getting into the padding, and provides a smooth surface easily brushed when the rug is taken up.

After rugs and carpets have been properly laid, the next question is how to clean them, and keep in good condition, so that they will wear a





long time, but without using any more labor and energy than necessary. So far as possible, dirt should be kept out of the house by placing fiber mats at doorways, by insisting that muddy shoes be cleaned outside, and by keeping walks and porches clean.

We all know that frequent and systematic cleaning is better than once-or-twice-a-year cleaning. House furnishings -- rugs, furniture, curtains, and so on -- are injured by being allowed to become too dirty.

Now, how do we sweep our rugs? In a dustless manner, so far as we are able. By dampening the broom, or by scattering crumpled, dampened bits of newspapers, or moist tea leaves, on the rug. We must use these methods with care, however, for delicate colors may be ruined by too much moisture. If a rug or carpet still seems very dusty after cleaning, it's a good idea to wipe the surface with a cloth, wrung as dry as possible, from clear water.

One of the great advantages of rugs over carpets is that rugs can be taken out-of-doors more easily and more often, to be cleaned. They should be turned, face down, on grass, or on dry snow, if you happen to have dry snow at your disposal. Beat with a flat carpet beater, and sweep both sides of the rug, thoroughly. Be careful about shaking rugs too vigorously. Shaking gets rid of the dirt, but it is very likely to break threads, and loosen bindings. Beating or brushing rugs or carpets, hung over a line, may also strain or break the threads.

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Today's menu -- excuse me, do you all have pencils and paper? Then we'll write today's menu, which is a mighty nice one for a September Monday: Fried Apples and Bacon; Buttered Cauliflower; Lettuce with a Tart Dressing; and for dessert, Waffles and Honey.

There's a recipe for Fried Apples and Bacon in the Radio Cookbook, on page 12. There's a recipe for Waffles on page 51, so we're all set, and ready to cook this dinner:

Once more, the menu: Fried Apples and Bacon; Buttered Cauliflower; Lettuce with a Tart Dressing; and for dessert, Waffles and Honey.

Tuesday: "The Story of Mrs. Petersen's Kitchen."

